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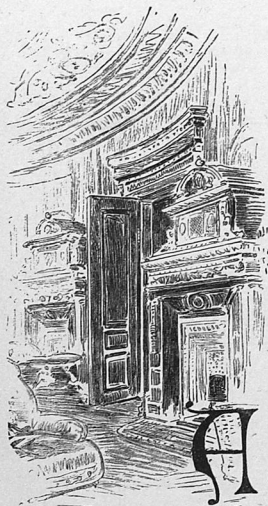
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WHAT TO DO WITH A COUNTRY HOUSE.

BY
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Author of "How to Furnish a Home," etc., etc.

AN ADVANTAGE of country houses over city residences is that they offer so much more variety, and are capable of picturesque arrangements and surprises that would be out of place in the latter. Above all, however, they can be made to take on a look of home, an aspect of being really lived in and used for every-day purposes of life, which is too often absent from a dwelling that is merely a fraction of a brown stone row.

The country house is not elbowed by its neighbors, but has abundant room and space to be an individual; and here, even more than elsewhere, is the folly apparent of putting one's house for furnishing into the hands of an upholsterer and artistic decorator,—one who is only this and nothing more. Even an artist, if a man, will fail to give that look of cosiness and individuality which a woman, with anything of a domestic and poetic nature, never fails to bestow.

It is with the furnishing rather than the house that we propose to deal, yet the structure itself is often the greatest stumbling-block to harmonious effects—a pretentious dwelling with cloud-like ceilings and exaggerated windows, being incapable of anything but a city look when furnished. A tall country house is an abomination, even where there is much ground space; but the latter attribute gives delightful possibilities in the shape of a square hall, a summer parlor on one side and a winter parlor on the other, a generous dining-room and kitchen and a small library.

The house we have selected is not a cheap one, that is, low-priced, and it will require a comfortable income to furnish and occupy it. There are many, however, in this favored land, who have, or want, just such houses; but there are few who furnish them in anything like harmony. Whatever the outside of the structure may be, whether of wood or stone, a modified Queen Ann, or a rampant Tudor, or merely a substantial family mansion on general principles, we have our several rooms, and can work our own sweet will on them accordingly.

It must be remembered, though, that while a certain amount of richness is becoming in a house of this size and cost, where cheap, cottage prettiness would be quite out of place, care must be taken to avoid a pretentious *city* look, making one feel that, save for the air and space outside, he might as well be among city bricks and mortar. The furnishing should be essentially that of a country house, if the country house of a millionaire. "My house," says the author of that delightful vision, *My House; An Ideal*, "was built for the pleasure and happiness of me and mine, and hence it is not kept simply to look at. My house has an air of hospitality and life." A country house that does not look hospitable has come short of half its excuse for being, and all *stiffness* of furniture and arrangement is antagonistic to hospitality. Nothing should be too good, in its proper place, for human nature's daily food; there should be no expensive satins and embroideries for furniture coverings; not because they are expensive, but because they will not endure ordinary wear and tear.

The walls of a country house are almost sure to offend; for the devices of the paper-hanger and decorator are subtle, and it is a fixed article of his creed to insist upon gold papers and flashy, expensive papers of all kinds, wherever there is an atmosphere of wealth. He quite ignores the fact that it is not the walls that are to decorate the rooms, but the things which are put upon and against the walls; and a paper which is called handsome or pretty as an abstract article, will often produce the very reverse of this effect, when in conjunction with the articles on and around it. The old adage, *Handsome is that handsome does*, can be more truly asserted of walls than of many other things.

The handsomest wall covering, when one is so fortunate as to control this much-offended article, is *wood*; whether of pine, or chestnut, or oak or cherry—cherry in its natural shade of pinkish brown, with the ordinary woodwork in deeper color, and a dado of olive-green matting painted with cherry blossoms. No frieze; only a handsome moulding of cherry and olive, with a little dull gold; ceiling of warm cream color.

This would make an admirable background for the furniture of our country parlor, which should be a generous-sized room, twenty, perhaps, by twenty-two, or even more. Space is a charm in itself; and the cramped proportions of rooms where there has evidently been money enough expended to make them larger, is one of the unexplained mysteries. The ceiling should scarcely exceed twelve feet; a room that is rather low than high, for its size, has a more homelike and comfortable air than one of greater height. Numerous windows give a feeling of "all-out-doors," and produce unpleasant cross-lights; two in the front and a bay at the side, or *vice versa*, being quite enough.

The floor of this room can be treated in almost any style, except that of carpeting every square inch of it, unless it is a *wood-carpet* in the two shades of cherry on the walls. This would be the perfection of floor-covering. A large square rug in front of the fireplace, with pale blue, olive and cream in the coloring, and narrower ones beside each sofa, are sufficient in the way of carpet. Madras curtains of rich, soft texture, in blue and cream. They should be hung beneath lattice-work of dark cherry, with small brass rings. A narrow breadth of double-faced, dark blue velours may be hung far back on either side.

The two sofas which the room will require should be particularly comfortable-looking. Let one be an Oriental lounge without ends, upholstered in the best manner, and having two great square, tasseled pillows at the back. The covering should be rich, but light in tone, broad stripes across the width having a very good effect. For the other sofa and three or four low Marquise thairs, a rich French cretonne in blue and cream. Pretty tables and cabinets in light and dark cherry; a handsome cherry mantel, undisfigured by scarf or lambrequin; abundant light chairs easily moved about; and a handsome Bagdad portière, with broad stripes of blue, curtaining the wide doorway into the hall.

For ornaments, a pretty collection of China is quite in order; and a huge China jar, filled with the blossoms of the season, should stand in the open fireplace. Low glass or China bowls with roses may be scattered around the room. An ornamental and equally useful lamp, with cherry blossoms painted on its crimson silk shade, deserves a table to itself; and some pretty China candlesticks may be indulged with candles of the same bright color. Good Dresden figures and old-time vases with covers, would be appropriate for the mantel; and a few landscapes in water colors, and some good etchings would furnish abundant works of art.

The next step takes us where our first should have been—into the square hall. This, we will say, is paneled with oak; and above this dado there is a wall paper of dull red, and a frieze of black Japanese figures. A rug of Brussels carpeting, in a small Persian figure, shows about a foot of wood-carpet in oak and walnut; the hat-stand of oak is noticeably plain, and the seat under it is cushioned with dark red leather. There are two or three good pictures; two handsomely carved German chairs, and a walnut cabinet containing the minerals and curiosities of the region. At the foot of the oak staircase there is a white goatskin rug; and a narrow strip of mixed carpet winds its way to the second floor.

The winter parlor is not supposed to be inhabited at the season from which it takes its name; but it is a wonderfully cosy place during the equinoctial storm or some October gale. There is a look of warmth about it, even without the open fire; and this, to the furnishing of a room, is like diamonds on the person. First, the walls are papered with a pattern of gold leaves on a cream-colored ground, with a frieze of garnet and salmon. The dado, brown acorns on a terra-cotta ground, and the woodwork, oiled pine. The rattan sofa and chairs have plain crimson cushions of raw silk, and the same material drapes the windows. The floor is fully carpeted, in rather dark, mixed colors, and a gilded stand for plants is near one of the windows. There are footstools and various comfortable devices in this room; some handsome cabinets in ebony and a rich-looking mantel in the same dark wood. The broad glass reflects the flames of the fire, and the handsome silver candelabra, of old-fashioned make, at either end of the shelf. There are pictures, of course, but not too many; a few good landscapes in oil, with plain, rich frames. The general impression made by this

winter parlor is one of warmth, brightness and comfort.

The dining-room is another study; and the first sensation there is that of a soft, subdued, rose-colored light—a most excellent thing in dining-rooms, but something of a novelty, as a certain masculine tone, in form and coloring, is deemed to accord best with the prosaic purpose of their being. The rose-colored light is evolved from a marvel of stained glass in the windows, not marvelous because unattainable, but simply because it is in the right place, and casts just the exact shade of reflection desired. The principal artificial light, too, a chandelier with candles, is over the table, at just the proper height; and the candles are protected by glass shades of ruby tint, that continue the daytime illusion of *couleur de rose*. The same color also prevails in the glassware used on the table; and having expatiated on the general effect of this most attractive dining-room, we will now proceed to details.

The tone of the room is light, without being in the least glaring; and what woodwork is visible in the furniture is of dark mahogany. Very little of the frame, however, is seen; and the straight, wide backs and seats of the chairs are covered with a soft, embossed plush, in a rather light shade of olive green. This may sound somewhat out of keeping with the rules laid down for a country house, but the material is not showy, while it is far more satisfactory for use than slippery morocco, which always has a *cold* look. A little fine carving of the mahogany ends, and a narrow brass rod finish the top of these very handsome chairs. The two armchairs are beautifully finished in the same style; and there is a lounge to correspond on one side of the fireplace.

A liberal, but judicious use of brass ornaments gives the room a very bright and rich appearance; and the mahogany *buffet* is a glittering marvel of beauty, with its burnished trimmings, and the glow and sparkle of its glass treasures. The windows are condensed into one immense bay, that with its rose light at top, and the charming view through the lower panes, is an ornamental feature of the dining-room. It is made still more attractive by a pile of Moorish cushions in pink, white and green, which add both to the comfort and the decoration of the spacious recess.

The woodwork of this room is in pale ash; the dado of maroon and gold; above this there are peach blossoms on a soft gray ground. Mouldings in place of frieze, in maroon, rose color, olive and gold; the ceiling in bars of light olive enclosing the palest pink. The floor is tiled in terra-cotta, and the large Smyrna rug in the center shows olive and maroon. The only curtains at the large window are scant Turkish ones, drawn back on either side, in stripes of gold and rose color. The rod is of brass, with a lion's head at each end. The ash mantel is warmed with maroon and rose-colored vases; while among them gleams just a suspicion of blue.

The room allotted to the library is not spacious, yet quite large enough for a goodly assemblage of books, and all the comforts and conveniences needed. The great thing in a library is to make it look cheerful—no very easy thing in a room devoted to books—and to keep out plaster busts if possible. The authority already quoted says of his library: "We thought it better to mount over our bookshelves a few cheerful bits of faience rather than the conventional array of ghastly plaster heads; and we have permitted ourselves to hang here an etching, there a bit of water color, here a charcoal drawing, there an old piece of bronze, here an old sword, there a brass scabbard; here an old portrait, there a study from an artist's portfolio; here an artistic tile, there a piece of pottery, giving some attention to harmonious arrangement, but imitating the audacious freedom one often finds in an artist's atelier."

This suggests a delightful room, entirely free from the stiffness and coldness of the regulation library; and this feeling can be deepened by the warm tone of a dark crimson moquette carpet made as a rug. The floor and woodwork may be of walnut; but the furniture should be oak, as lighter and more cheerful in color, and it will look particularly well upholstered in maroon leather. Curtains of Madras, in rich, well-selected stained-glass colors would add to the appearance of soft brightness, and also relieve the effect, generally depressing, of family portraits. For the library, and not the dining-room, is the appropriate place for them, as being the least public one, although it has long been a popular idea that they should look down from their respective eyries on the wall, upon the breakfasts, luncheons and dinners of their descendants.

With the tendrils of growing vines playing outside the windows, while the south winds softly blow, and the golden flicker of firelight within, when autumn yields his trumpet for a blast, the

library will be a room to delight in for an hour's chat or a quiet time of reading.

Mounting to the second floor, we find, perhaps, four good-sized sleeping rooms, a small dressing-room, and abundant closets. The largest of these rooms is over the parlor, and has the continuation of the bay window, and two others. This room, the one *par excellence*, is to be a sort of fairy bower, and the color we have chosen, a light sea green, as near as possible to the shimmer of some exquisite silk, requires careful treatment. The woodwork should be of chestnut, and also that part of the floor which shows around the carpet. Sprays of the beautiful green leaves, and golden catkins of the tree, painted over the door panels, would have a charming effect. For the walls, cream-colored paper, with a network of small pink flowers over it; no dado, and a frieze of gold spiders' webs on deep green ground. Ceiling in pale pink. The carpet should show bunches of cherries and green leaves on a cream ground, with bordering in harmony; the bedstead, dressing-

cream, and the footstool and cushions are of silk. The pretty curtains are of soft cream Madras, with narrow ones of the carnation silk on either side, and they hang from straight cornices of ivory and gilded wood like the furniture. Gilt chains to match those of the bedstead loop them back.

The mantel may be covered with carnation silk, the lambrequin being similar to the bureau cover. The pictures in this room should have narrow pine frames edged with ebony, and a bracket or two in the same style would not be amiss. Red carnations, or roses, whenever it is possible to obtain them, would carry out a pretty conceit, especially if massed in a pale green bowl or basket.

A house of any pretensions, and especially a country house, without its blue room, is not to be thought of, and it can be made quite as beautiful as any, if care be taken to place this cold, but most lovely, color in a sunny situation. A very cheerful room, having the morning sun, should be selected, also, a room that is not too large or lofty.

and cream-colored sateen in alternate stripes, the cream-colored ones embroidered with blue morning-glories in outline work. A French cretonne, in blue and cream, or blue and gold, would make appropriate furniture covering; and the curtains should be of the cream-colored sateen, trimmed with broad bands of the cretonne; or they could be made of the two sateens in perpendicular, or horizontal stripes, suspended from a mahogany pole. Any one of these styles would be found very satisfactory.

For the rug, a golden-brown with pale blue, cream, and a suspicion of dark red. Brussels carpet, in two shades of golden brown, with blue and dark red in the bordering is equally desirable. The mantel to be covered with blue sateen, the lambrequin matching the bed cover and finished like that with lace. The bureau-cover is of lace lined with blue sateen, and trimmed at the ends with blue and white fringe. A very pretty and serviceable upholstered table, to match the other furniture covering, will be improved by a white

linen cover thrown across it, having the ends embroidered in blue morning-glories. Dark red Japanese vases ornament the mantel-shelf.

The pink, or rose, room will be a greater favorite with some, for the beauty of coloring arrests the eye at once, and the exquisite flower is continually repeated.

The woodwork for this room should be of walnut, and the dado of deep olive. Above this, a pale pink paper, with irregular tracings of gold here and there. Moulding of walnut, olive and gold, with a touch of crimson; ceiling of palest blue. A Kensington rug in olive green will make a good carpet.

The framework of the bed, lounge, chairs and table, is all covered with crepe cretonne, in a pattern of pink roses, buds and leaves on a pale salmon ground, and the effect is really beautiful. The lace cover and pillow slips of the bed are lined with rose color, and the lace window curtains are also lined with the same soft hue. The two pieces of furniture that cannot be treated to an overdress of cretonne, the bureau and the washstand, are of natural cherry beautifully polished.

The brown doors are paneled, with roses painted on a cream-colored ground; and the mantel, which is a very simple, pretty one, of natural cherry, polished like the furniture, has on it old-fashioned China jars filled with natural flowers. The

dressing-table is arranged with a small canopy of lace rose-lined, and the few favored ones who contemplate themselves in it, pronounce it the most becoming glass they ever tried.

The small dressing-room, supposed to be for the benefit of a gentleman, is fitted up in peacock blue, this rich color predominating in a small Kensington rug, and the velvet covering of the lounge. The woodwork is walnut, and the dado and wall paper are in two shades of terra-cotta. The curtains to the one window are of light peacock-blue sateen, banded with terra-cotta, and over the small oval dressing-mirror are clustered some rather suggestive peacock feathers.

A moderately large house can be furnished in this style on from \$3,500 to \$5,000, with everything excellent of its kind, but the general idea could, of course, be carried out on a smaller expenditure.

An elegant picture frame in steel-colored bronze represents a curtain with folds partially gathered by a twisted gold cord.



DESIGN FOR PARLOR CABINET, BY EDWARD DEWSON.

Little side and corner tables, pretty brackets and cabinets, holding China and other treasures, a *tête-à-tête* service in green and pink, and a dainty writing-desk in cherry will complete a very pretty room. Lace tidies lined with pink will ornament and protect the lounge and chairs.

A carnation-colored room is equally unique, and charming as well, when the room is large and handsome enough to bear this rich hue, and the lovely rosy shadows are as beautifying as those in the dining-room. For this color, let the woodwork be painted white with wax finish, and the door-panels "picked out" with carnation pink and a little dead gold; the wall paper should be in very pale green and gold, with a deep band at top and bottom of red carnations on a cream-colored ground. If carnations cannot be had, red roses will make a good substitute. The floor should be of yellow pine, with a rug in pale green and cream color.

A handsome, painted bedstead, bureau and washstand, of ivory-white, ornamented with dull gold, the bedstead having a half-canopy attachment, from which hang curtains, falling away on either side, of carnation silk in Japanese, or some light texture. They can be fastened back with gilt chains. A carnation-lined bed-cover and pillow-shams will complete a very elegant couch.

The bureau, or dressing-table, is low, and guiltless of a marble top, but it has an embroidered linen cover of open work, heavily fringed at each end, and through this gleams the same warm hue that characterizes the room. Toilet-bottles and appurtenances in green and ruby carry out the flower idea, and around the oval mirror frame is twisted a scarf of carnation silk. Sofa and chairs are covered in broad stripes of carnation and

Yellow pine will be most satisfactory for the woodwork of this apartment, and the bedstead and other furniture would look particularly well in mahogany. If ash furniture, so generally used with blue, is preferred, the woodwork should be of walnut; either combination would be perfectly harmonious. But yellow pine has the advantage of cheerfulness, and mahogany furnishes more than ash. We will arrange then for yellow pine and mahogany.

Green must be strictly banished from this room, unless a little olive creeps into the rug; and beginning with the walls, we will get, if it is possible to find such a thing, a cream-colored paper with blue morning-glories twisting gracefully over it. Neither dado nor frieze, only a molding of gray, rose-pink, mahogany color and gold. Ceiling of cream color. Failing this, a paper in pale terra-cotta and gold, with a frieze of blue and golden-brown; blue morning-glories painted on the doors.

The low, finely-carved bedstead might be covered with a very pretty counterpane made of blue